

Maria Cantwell  
US Senator, Washington  
915 Second Avenue, Suite 3206  
Seattle, WA 98174

Greetings,

We are reaching out to urge you to join us in humanitarian efforts and to resist, to the fullest extent possible, the implementation of the federal administration's recent use of a "zero tolerance" strategy for families seeking asylum in the United States. This policy deceptively removes and involuntarily holds children apart from their parents. We strongly encourage you and your staff to meet with immigrants' rights attorneys and organizations to alleviate the current trauma and suffering of parents, predominantly mothers. They are being held in the SeaTac Detention Facility and have no knowledge of where their children are being held, no effective means of contacting them and no effective access to legal assistance.

As a religious community promoting compassion and justice in the Seattle area for the past 150 years, we protest the lack of compassion and creativity that leads to the cruel and inhumane traumatization of children and parents, and even the separation of brothers and sisters, in the mistaken justification of "deterrence." The forced separation of family members based on ethnicity and immigrant status has been a systemic evil in the United States since before its founding. This evil has long infected the Pacific Northwest, from enslavement of those of African descent, exclusion of those of Chinese descent and internment of those of Japanese descent, to the forced boarder schooling of those of Native American descent. Add to that the ongoing discrimination of children of color in the criminal justice, human services and education systems. This systemic racism, which is so damaging and morally reprehensible, must stop, and you can help. You are well aware that the administration's strategy of forced separation violates human rights under international law, causes unnecessary trauma and long-term harm to children and creates mistrust of the federal government. We call upon you to do everything in your power to release the parents being held in our state and reunite them with their children immediately. They should be given access to attorneys to file their asylum claims and remain together as families while their cases are being processed.

Thank you for considering our letter.

Sincerely in Faith,

Lorelie M. Kaid  
Moderator, Plymouth Congregational Church

Plymouth Congregational Church Council – Lorelie Kaid (Moderator), Bing Tso (Vice Moderator), Madeline Beery (Secretary), Debbie Baden, Karen Clark, Elizabeth Gordon, Katherine Guthrie, Courtney Hashimoto, Mike Pierson, and Kyna Shilling along with Lead Minister Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown and Executive Minister Rev. Steven Davis

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